

ATPAC UPDATE

AREA OF CONCERN 123-2

4/19/06

SAFETY: No

SUBJECT: Aircraft Vertical Performance Data

DISCUSSION: Paragraph 4-4-9d of the AIM contains broad guidance for pilots relating to aircraft descent and climb rates. Specifically; the second sentence of the paragraph begins with the words “*Descend or climb at an optimum rate consistent with the operating characteristics of the aircraft.....*” This phrase is all encompassing and does adequately recognize that specific climb and descent performance criteria is largely controlled by flight management system vertical guidance programs, aircraft type, and specific operator procedures. Therefore, specific performance criteria are not included in the paragraph, nor are there any regulatory requirements relating to this subject. Most pilot operations manuals only contain information extracted from paragraph 4-4-9 relating to a requirement to notify ATC if a climb or descent of at least 500ft per minute cannot be sustained.

However, Appendix A of FAA Order 7110.65 contains climb and descent figures for most aircraft operating in the ATC system. If the purpose of this information is to provide controllers guidance on what performance they may expect from aircraft they are controlling, they may be working with erroneous data. Also, Note 2 of paragraph 4-5-7e of FAA Order 7110.65, refers to descent rates contained in the AIM: “*Controllers need to be aware that the descent rates in the AIM are only suggested and aircraft will not always descend at those rates.*” ALPA believes that this paragraph was originally intended to refer to the performance figures contained in Appendix A of 7110.65, as there does not appear to be any correlation to what is contained in the AIM.

SUGGESTED ATPAC ACTION: That ATPAC review this information and recommend that Note 2 of paragraph 4-5-7e, FAAO 7110.65 either be deleted or changed to pertain to the data contained in Appendix A of the Order, and, that the data contained in Appendix A be reviewed to insure it reflects the most accurate and complete performance information for controller guidance.

123 – Chart needs to be updated or removed. Each chart is based on certification. How pilots fly it can be different. Appendix redone when LAHSO was being worked. ATO-T will coordinate with Certification, then evaluate whether chart should remain.

124 - ATO-T will coordinate with Certification then evaluate whether chart should remain.

125 – Due to insufficient time for the appropriate discussions this AOC will be further deferred until 126.

126 – The current status of this item is unknown and should be worked by ATO-T.

127 – This item's status remains unreported.

128 – Ben Grimes reported that this item will be discussed at an August meeting and a determination will be made to revise, eliminate climb characteristics, and/or eliminate the table.

129 – This item was again discussed as needing updating or cancellation because it is not current with aircraft performance.

130 – A report received via email advised that a panel has been convened to discuss this item as it relates to ICAO directives.

131 – Various groups are being polled with the intent to determine their use of the .65 appendix with a goal to determine if the chart is valid enough to continually update or eliminate for controller use.

CURRENT STATUS: DEFERRED

RECOMMENDATION: Chart needs to be updated or removed.

IOU: ATO-R will check on the status of panel discussions and report at #132.